Fowl Feathered Review

No. 195

Issue 195: CINDERELLA'S LOST SLIPPER MEETS 72-HOUR BLOWOUT SALE!

Fowl Feathered Review is a quarterly, a disordered artifact of the human impulse to categorize and consume the ephemeral. Produced by the Springwound Mammoth Pancake Coalition—an entity distinct from its waffle-centric counterpart—it is birthed under the Fowlpox Press imprint. Virgil Kay, its editor, presides over this enterprise from a paper canoe adrift on the Passagassawakeag, a river of dubious depth and even more dubious inhabitants. Surrounded by featherheads and their aquatic card games, Kay's reign is absolute, his word the final arbiter in the transformation of boastful souls into doormats. Layout and visual conceits are the province of Cookie Granola, while melodrama and histrionics fall under the purview of Childe Harold. Silent Bill, in his characteristically taciturn manner, provides necessary pauses. The review's structural integrity, or lack thereof, is the domain of Unkie Bob, whose talents extend to the mitigation of typographical errors and the prevention of electrical conflagrations. Everett Enótita serves as Kay's indispensable amanuensis, and the Ecum Secum Literary Brain Trust, in a gesture of dubious beneficence, offers nominal financial support. Printed upon the verdant expanse of Bald Porcupine Island, and laced with the enigmatic Kraa, a bioengineered culinary enigma, the Fowl Feathered Review remains a testament to human ingenuity, or perhaps merely a symptom of cultural decline. ISSN: 1929-7238.

"I am an observer of life, a non-participant who takes no sides. I am in the regimented society, but not of it."
--Moondog, The Viking of 6th Avenue

Return Policy:
If this magazine does not meet your expectations,
please return it to us in its original condition
for a full refund, minus the cost of enlightenment.

Submissions

Fowlpox Press: A Submission Guide for the Determined (or Deluded)
To the Aspiring Artist (or Sandwich Enthusiast):

1. **Craft** (or **Culinary Construct**): 2-227 poems, a numerical range that hints at both ambition and a troubling lack of self-editing, may find their way to our digital doorstep (fowlpoxpress@mail2poet.com). Alternatively, for the visually inclined, paintings numbered 2-953 (a prolific career, or perhaps a basement overflowing with forgotten canvases?) are welcome. We are also, inexplicably, open to submissions of twelve-inch sandwiches.
2. **The Gatekeeper:** Address your offerings to Virgil Kay, Editor. In posession of remarkably discerning taste, or so he believes, Virgil is a rooster of some renown, a creature of instinct and inexplicable confidence. His title, "China Wok Habitue," suggests a broader palate than one might expect from a bird, though it's more likely a testament to the local takeout joint's generous portions. (**Please note:** Include a bio, a desperate plea for recognition that will likely join the unread masses in the digital purgatory of our slush pile.)
3. **Format:** Poems, those valiant attempts at capturing the human experience in meter and rhyme, should be attached in a Word document or PDF. Paintings, windows into your soul (or a weekend spent with Bob Ross reruns), must be submitted in JPEG, TIFF, or a format our aging technology can comprehend. Jokes, if they exist, should be delivered in MP3 format. We are, alas, not equipped to handle the nuanced art of the live performance. Sandwiches, a curious offering in the realm of artistic expression, require clear plastic wrapping and a small packet of Kewpie Mayonnaise. (**Pro-tip:** The Kewpie packaging is, undeniably, a work of art in its own right, and we encourage you to admire it before consumption.)
4. **The Cycle Continues:** We exist in a perpetual state of acceptance and rejection. A Sisyphean task, some might say. We receive submissions 365 days a year, a testament to the relentless hope, or perhaps blissful ignorance, of aspiring artists. However, with a heavy heart (and a full crop), we must inform you that rejections also occur 365 days a year.
5. **The Sandwiches:** Ah, the sandwiches. These, unlike your artistic endeavors, find a permanent home within our editorial sanctum. Virgil, in his infinite wisdom, has determined that a diet rich in carbohydrates is essential for maintaining his regal demeanor.
6. **Leap Year Follies:** Leap years, those extra days gifted by the whims of the calendar, offer no reprieve. Aspiring poets, it seems, are undeterred by such temporal anomalies. You are, however, cordially invited to "take a flying leap" during these additional 24 hours.

Please proceed with caution. Artistic aspirations are a delicate dance, and the path to publication is littered with the fallen hopes of countless dreamers. But hey, maybe your sandwich is killer. Just remember, Kewpie or bust.

Fowl Feathered Review | Poets & Writers (pw.org)

"Non ignora mali, miseris succurrere disco."

— Virgil, The Aeneid

PARALLELOGRAMS AKIMBO: PSYCHOTROPIC ORBITS IN THE TENTH DIMENSION

BY HAHN EGGER

I.

Psychotropic–
the mind, a vessel for altered states,
where pharmacology and psychology
collide in the nebulae of perception.
Here, consciousness is a shifting field,
a mutable geometry
spiraling through the tenth dimension–
not merely a string theorist's abstraction,
but a lived, felt expansion,
where the boundaries of self
dissolve into cosmic possibility.

II.

Spiraling–
not as a simple curve,
but as a widening gyre,
a Möbius paradox
folded into parallelograms–
Euclidean forms
reimagined by the dreaming brain,
each side parallel,
each angle a portal
to another state of being.

III.

Stellar orbital synergy–
the harmony of celestial bodies,
Pythagoras' music of the spheres
refracted through Jung's collective unconscious,
where stars are archetypes
and orbits are the patterns
of our psychic dance.
Betelgeuse, Vega,

and the hypothetical planets
of constellations unnamed
move in synchrony,
a cosmic choreography
mirrored in the mind's own orbits.

IV.

Eight planes akimbo–
dimensions splayed,
arms and legs of reality
outstretched in disarray,
Vitruvian Man
caught in the centrifugal pull
of Lacan's fractured mirror.
Here, the planes are not aligned–
they are akimbo,
each a realm of possibility,
each a psychological axis
tilted toward chaos,
yet part of a larger,
unknowable whole.

V.

This is not a theorem,
but a metaphysical map–
a chart of constellations
both known and hypothetical,
where the psyche spirals
through dimensions
and the stars
are the synapses of the universe,
firing in synergy,
akimbo,
in the ever-expanding
geometry of being.

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The Dollar Store Oracle:

A Crow's Reflection

on the Sacred and the Sale

By H. Paul Darcy

Perched on the plastic spine of The Holy Grail Across the Atlantic,
I, a crow of discerning taste, survey my realm:
a fluorescent purgatory where the sacred and profane
brush shoulders like distant cousins at a family feast.
Berdyaev's The Meaning of the Creative Act gathers dust—
beside a bent bag of marbles, whispering secrets to a slushie machine,
which hums a hymn: "All quests are just scavenging."
I caw at the irony:
creativity as divine rebellion—
in a store where everything's priced to vanish,
like tears in rain, or soul's last flicker.

The cashier's eyes glaze over,
trapped in the glow of false heaven's lights–
she doesn't see the grail in the discount bin
or the divine in a child's clutching fist.
"His prices are INSANE...ly beautiful!"
I flap wings, summoning a congregation–
discarded dreams, dusty bestsellers,
secret histories–
hidden truths humans hide from themselves,
like last week's markdowns.
Through dollar store glass, I see fractured truths–
reflections in a funhouse mirror,
glittering trash and broken mirrors–
a universe reduced to a gum pack, a marble rolling free.
Nikolai whispers: "Creativity is rebellion."
But I crow:
"Rebellion against what?
The inevitability of the sale?"
A plastic cross, a broken toy,
a VHS of The Robe–
all equal under fluorescent skies.

Eternity, priced at $1.99,
tagged ‘As-Is,’ waiting for someone to claim it.
I tap the window with my beak–
a Morse code no one deciphers:
“The grail isn’t across the Atlantic–
it’s here, among crumbs, in shattered dreams,
in the way a child’s fingers close around a toy sword.”
Berdyaev said the creative act bridges the eternal;
I say it’s the cashier’s dance over the register–
a ballet of necessity, beauty born of the banal.
Outside, the city hums–cars, sirens, screams–
but in this store, I am maestro of the mundane,
orchestrating meaning from the margins:
where holy and hollow collide in bumper cars
at the carnival of the overlooked.
I tilt my head, studying humans–
map-readers, myth-chasers, seekers of bargains–
they quest in aisles of the obsolete,
while I find the sacred in a broken mirror,
in the rustle of a receipt turned prayer scroll.
This dollar store is my cloister, my labyrinth,

where I meditate on beauty in the discarded.
Words—Berdyaev, Bradley, Theilmann-Bean—
are feathers I could wear, but I prefer the raw, the real, the now.
The creative act? It's in the peck at a candy wrapper—
turning rubbish into proverb, profane into prophecy.
The grail isn't lost; it's priced at $1.99,
tagged "As-Is," waiting to be claimed.
I spread my wings—shadow against the glare—
the humans will keep searching, maps unfolding
like paper cuts—while I remain,
the oracle of the overlooked, whispering truths
in the aisles.
"The holy grail," I caw, "isn't across the Atlantic—
it's here—in the crumbs, the broken dreams,
where everything is cheap, and nothing is meaningless."

MATRYONA

By Regina Lena Isakova

The rain in Upstate New York smelled of iron and regret—a scent Matryona recognized instantly. It clung to the cobblestones of her childhood city, as if carrying the weight of centuries. She'd arrived in this small town, nestled among the rolling hills of Sullivan County, a decade ago, fleeing a life that felt like a poorly stitched samovar—beautiful on the surface, leaking steam and disappointment within. Now, at eighty-two, she was returning—not with a suitcase full of memories, but with a hollow ache, a persistent question mark etched into her soul.

Her first encounter was with Mr. Petrov, a retired clockmaker who lived above the bakery on Main Street. He was meticulously polishing a grandfather clock, its face frozen at 3:17.

"Time," he rasped, voice like dry leaves, "is a cruel mistress. She steals what you have, then mocks you with the promise of more."

Matryona paused, feeling a sudden, sharp pang—an old, familiar wound. Mr. Petrov's words reminded her of her father, a stern man who measured time in the precise movements of his hands—an unyielding man she'd loved and resented in equal measure.

The bus ride from Albany to St. Petersburg blurred past her like a gray tapestry—fading fields, fleeting faces. She clutched a worn photograph of her childhood home—a cramped, three-story apartment overlooking Nevsky Prospekt, the Fontanka Canal winding sluggishly below. The city had grown taller, more imposing, but the canal still flowed, a dull ribbon beneath the overcast sky.

Her apartment building, the Dom Krestov, remained unchanged—the crumbling monument to a vanished era. Inside, damp plaster and cabbage scent the air. She found her old neighbors, mostly gone, replaced by a young couple renovating the place. Irina, a vibrant artist with paint-stained hands, offered her tea and a hesitant smile.

"It's... different," Irina said, gesturing around the room. "But the bones are still here."

Irina's restless energy felt like a shard of the spirit Matryona had buried long ago—a spirit that once danced to the rhythms of ballet, a spirit she'd traded for quiet solitude. She watched her through a haze of nostalgia, wondering if she'd ever reclaim that vitality.

Later, she wandered the streets, a ghost among ghosts. Nevsky Prospekt was a torrent of modern commerce—neon signs, bustling cafes—an assault on her memories of horse-drawn carts and street vendors. She paused in a dusty bookstore, inhaling the scent of aged paper and leather. A young man browsing the shelves caught her gaze—Dimitri, a student of Russian literature. He looked up, eyes bright with passion.

"Pushkin is a mirror," he said softly. "Reflecting the soul of Russia—its glory and shame alike."

His words stirred something within her—a forgotten language of the heart. He reminded her of her late husband, a scholar who had kindled her love for the classics. She nodded, but her mind drifted elsewhere.

One afternoon, she sat on a bench in Palace Square, watching tourists jostle past the Winter Palace. A little girl, no older than six, clutched a faded Matryoshka doll. Its

chipped paint and blank stare seemed to echo her own faded memories. Giddiness radiated from the child as she turned the doll over and over. A wave of dizziness washed over Matryona, and suddenly, she saw her youngest daughter—lost during the war—her face haunting her. A tear traced a slow path down her wrinkled cheek.

The girl looked up and smiled, unselfconscious, genuine. It was an unpolished, innocent smile—a recognition that transcended words. In that moment, something shifted within Matryona. The ache in her chest softened, not gone, but less sharp. It was as if a fragile thread tethered her to hope.

The girl held out the doll, offering it with a shy gesture. Matryona hesitated, then reached out and took it. The wood was cool and smooth in her hand—a tangible link to a lost world, a silent promise of something beyond grief.

The rain began again, a gentle, insistent drizzle. It still smelled of iron and regret, but now, faintly, it carried something else—an aroma of renewal, of a fragile hope. Matryona looked down at the doll and felt the faint whisper of a future she hadn't dared to imagine.

She stood, taking a slow breath, and watched the city and its gray skies. She was older now, battered perhaps, but still alive. Perhaps, like the city, she could find a way to mend the fractured layers of her past—one small, quiet stitch at a time.

The Azalea Protocol:
or
Where Finance Meets Fuchsia

By Kayla W. Zaap

Incoming! Fresh from NYC's forgotten pneumatic air tubes is a manilla envelope. Inside: Pierre Dørge's New Jungle Orchestra, live from Chicago. Boys in the back of the bank—conjoined tigers from a failed zoo—sort through the envelopes, drop the one with the music CD on your desk. After turning down a mortgage for an elderly man wanting to buy a single-wide trailer, you pop the music in the discreet stereo next to the potted azaleas. You see things. You seek out the old man, write him a check for $25,000, tell him you've got his back. The azaleas take over the building, spilling into the harbor.

Two blocks north on Genesee Street sits the venerable Buffalo National Bank (charter #NY05872), its granite façade so earnest it practically recites amortization schedules in its sleep. Inside, you—the impeccably pressed Senior Credit Officer—had just delivered the most pedestrian declination in Empire State history: "I'm afraid your DSCR of 0.85, combined with a 95% LTV on a 1985 Marlette Single-Wide, fails our Minimum Threshold of Sound Trailer Acquisitions." That phrase alone makes you imagine a magnifying glass hovering over "Trailers," as though trailers were microorganisms.

But then: pneumatic hail from Manhattan. The envelope lands like destiny—no, like a particularly enthusiastic pigeon. You slide the disc into the Bose stealth-stereo (model "Discretionary Fund 3000"), and *boom*—jazz avalanches across the marble floor, rattling the brass lion-head spittoons. The conjoined tigers wag their tails in syncopation, sorting "Approve" slips from "No Sail" slips while humming Coltrane licks in low baritones.

Possessed by this sonic brass-jungle fever, you tear off down the street to Parkway Trailer Estates, clipboard in hand. Your underwriting jargon rattles faster than a pneumatic tube: “We’ll need a completed Uniform Residential Loan Application (Form 1003), full HUD-1 Closing Statement, third-party appraisal of the chattel, plus verification of pension income and an irrevocable escrow for property taxes.” The old gent blinks at you, his spectacles fogging with unexpected hope. You slide him a freshly signed cashier’s check for $25,000—no origination fee, 2% discount point courtesy of your heart—and murmur, “Consider this your bridge loan to happiness.”

Meanwhile, back at 128 Genesee Street, the azaleas grow so voraciously that Teller #4’s coiffure is swallowed whole. Roots fracture the vault floor; petals cascade into the Buffalo River, turning it a scandalous shade of fuchsia. You peer through your office window, and quip to an imaginary colleague: “I detect an emergent botanical LIBOR—or at least the world’s first floral yield curve!” [1]

Dear reader, before you scoff—ask yourself: what’s a bank without a pinch of madness, a trailer without a chance, or a jazz-fueled banker who can’t rewrite his own rules? Grab your own pneumatic envelope. Make an offer they can’t refuse. After all, the only thing more improbable than azaleas in the harbor is kindness at prime lending terms—and that, my friends, is the best deal in town.

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[1] It is herein hypothesized that the petals’ sugar content might well subvert the entire municipal bond market—though further study is pending, pending being the operative word.

An Elegy of Nachos, Chickens, and Cremation: A Modern Fable of Grief and Absurdity

By Knoxley "Knucklehead" Norris

*Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, step right up, because what you are about to read is not just a story; it's a **limited-time offer** on the very fabric of reality itself! Can your heart even handle such exquisite narrative craftsmanship? Probably not, but that's why we've added extra padding for your emotional comfort, free with every purchase of this sentence.*

It was a Thursday evening, July 17, 2025, in the humid halls of Orono, Maine—an ordinary day, or so it seemed. My brother Max, a visionary of molten plastic, was orchestrating a symphony of twenty-six clear plastic spoons in the dishwasher, warping them into abstract sculptures or perhaps aerodynamic utensils for scooping existential dread. Why? Logic is for the weak! He was bending them into "various shapes," which in our household could mean anything from art to a makeshift wind instrument.

Meanwhile, I, a budding historian of the delightfully unreliable, was ranting into an empty trash can. My subject? The inherent subjectivity of historical records—a truth I conveyed with the nuanced vocalizations of a growling badger. **Honest, accurate history?** PFFFT! It's a sham, folks, a sham! And then, like a sudden commercial break in a profound philosophical episode, we noticed it: Dad, dressed in his majestic **chicken**

costume, seated serenely in his armchair, eyes glued to the psychedelic chaos of The Aquabats on TV. He wasn't moving.

"Check his pulse!" I yelled, perhaps a little too dramatically, but honestly, what's a moment of revelation without a bit of hyperbole? Max, ever pragmatic (for a guy who bends plastic spoons), did just that. The truth hit us with the force of a confetti cannon: Dad was gone. Gone, but not forgotten, and certainly not un-costumed.

The phone calls! Oh, the glorious, nonsensical phone calls! Max, with the stoicism of a seasoned telemarketer, dialed Mom at work. I, a master of the urgent and absurd, connected with emergency services. "911, what's your emergency?" asked a voice with the bland authority of a pre-recorded message. "Dyer Brook!" I declared, as if announcing the grand prize of a cosmic lottery.

And then, the plot thickened. A tornado warning blared across the line—severe weather, sirens wailing, chaos imminent. **Find a secure spot in the basement,** the voice urged. **Severe tornado warning!** It was chaos, and we, the resourceful kids, faced it head-on.

So, what do two grieving-yet-resourceful youths do? Drag Dad down the stairs to the basement, of course. Don't just read that—feel it. Can your heart even handle such exquisite narrative craftsmanship? Probably not, but that's why we added extra padding for your emotional comfort, free with every purchase of this sentence!

And where did Dad find his temporary sanctuary from the swirling winds of fate? The freezer, of course! Right on top of Mom's precious Fomapan film stock—the very essence of her artistic pursuits. We then grabbed some **Nachos**—because priorities, people!—and stayed low, hunkered down, ready to ride out the storm of grief and gale-force winds. Mom's voice crackled over Max's phone, concerned but pragmatic. "Are you okay? Has the tornado started?" We assured her everything was "fine," though inside, our hearts were pounding. Then, the question: "Where's Dad?"

"He's in the freezer!" we chirped, as if this were the most logical solution to death, disaster, and dinner all at once. Mom, ever the artist, responded with her signature

practicality: "Good idea, but don't let him squash the Fomapan film! It's new, and I need it for my dance project."

Her dance project—an ongoing passion where she photographs elderly dancers in ornate costumes against the dimming horizon of the Miracle Mile—was her dream. Every Saturday night, she captured their grace, their stories frozen in time. Dad adored those pictures; he'd even shelled out **$500 of his hobby money** to keep her art alive. Now, that money was destined to fund his cremation. The tornado? A mere whisper of catastrophe—a teaser for the real storm ahead.

When the authorities arrived—the police, ambulance, a parade of officialdom—we explained the freezer situation. Yes, Dad was in the freezer. To protect him from the tornado. Logic is for the weak!

Mom arrived shortly after, her artistic eye immediately honing in on the most pressing detail. "He looks pale," she mused, brow furrowed. "Don't you think he looks pale?" As if death hadn't already claimed all the color.

The next day, Dad was dispatched to **Sicko Sam's Cremation Station**, conveniently located near the railroad tracks. Their commercials were as memorable as the service: **"Sicko Sam's Cremation Station! Our Price: $999. Urn is free. 24-Hour Turnaround. Free delivery twenty miles from our Cremation Station! Come on down to Sicko Sam's!"** A jingle you couldn't get out of your head.

Dad was delivered by Quinn, a kid no older than Max, who looked and smelled utterly **high**. "Are you guys having tacos?" he asked Mom, eyes gleaming with the wisdom of someone who had scaled Everest—or at least had a prodigious night of adventures.

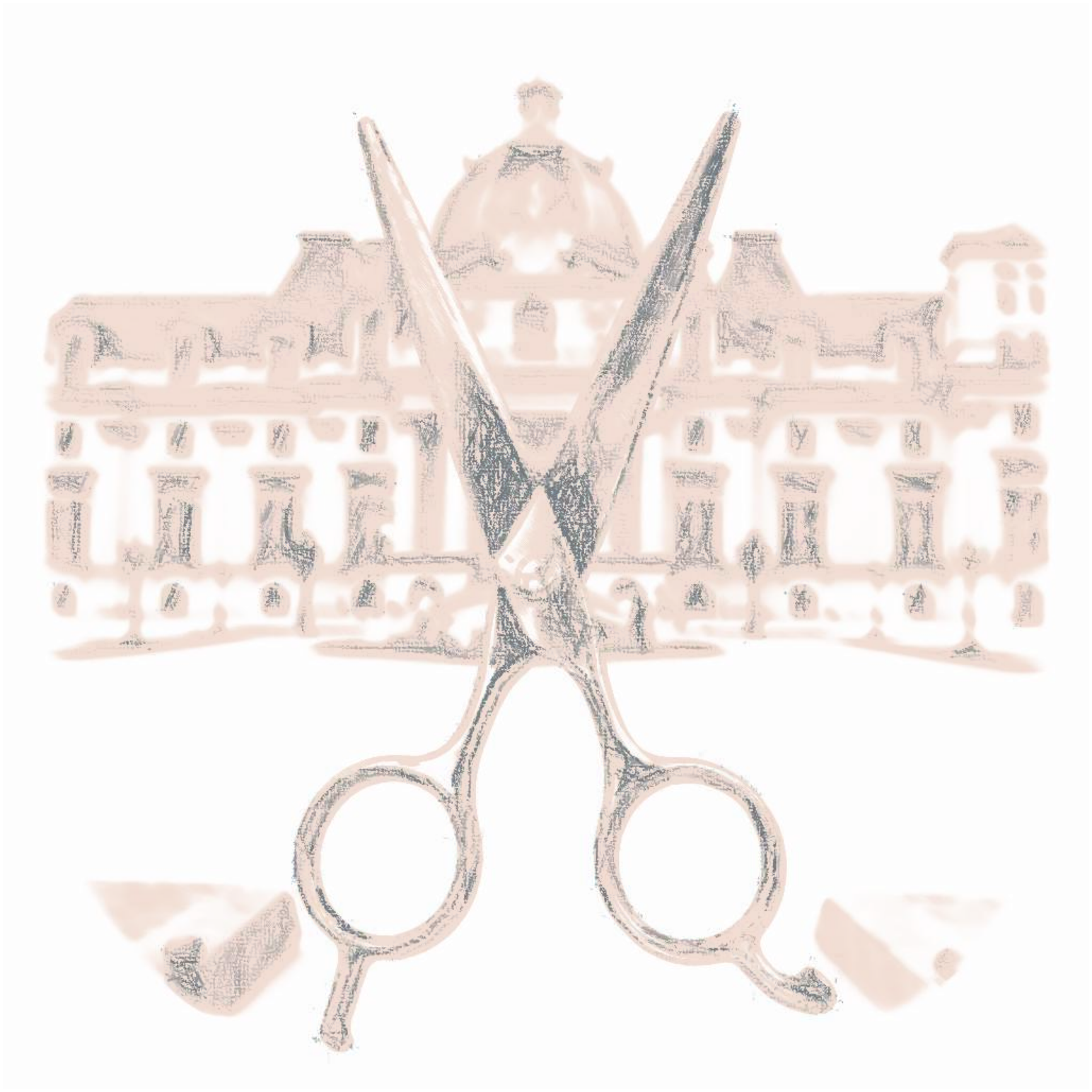
"Of course," Mom replied, ever gracious. "Would you like some?"

Quinn launched into an epic tale: "When I climbed Mount Everest," he declared mid-taco (eighth, by my count), "I said, 'This is me.' I've climbed most of the major mountains in the US." Mom, with a mischievous twinkle, held up Dad's urn in her hand. "Brad," she announced. "My Brad." Quinn responded with a grin, "Your Brad? My bad." And we all laughed—laughter that peeled through the chaos, a fragile release of the grief we carried.

Mom, realizing the catharsis in our collective hysteria, invited Quinn to Dad's celebration of life. Where else but **Mount Everest?** Because why settle for a local church hall when you can ascend to the spiritual heights, literally?
First, the ceremonial smashing of the **Chicken Piñata**–a symbol, joyfully ridiculous, filled with Dad's memory. Gram Lincoln, Uncle Boz, Cousin Denise, Quinn, Mom, Max, and I took turns wielding sticks. It was pure chaos, laughter echoing through the room.
Then, piled into the Dodge Caravan, we watched a video of Dad wandering through a field, wearing **shorts**, carrying a loaf of **Wonder bread** in each hand. Gram Lincoln sniffled, her eyes moist. "My son always had a way," she whispered, a truth born from that strange, beautiful man.

Our final destination: the library conference room, where we held the sacred ritual of **passing Twinkies**–four boxes, a symbol of sweetness and absurdity. Quinn, now a funeral connoisseur, declared it the "best funeral I've ever attended."
Max coughed, speaking softly of chalk dust on his lips, a small personal struggle amid the indifference of the universe. Mom reached out, her voice soothing, almost mischievous: "Don't worry, hon'," she said. "It's just Dad."

And there you have it, folks–a story of grief, nacho cheese, and the persistent spirit of a man who always had a way. Because sometimes, the most absurd moments are the ones that help us carry on.



Shedding

Blue light fractures across your face,
your voice a blade:
“you were a hairdresser.”
The word hangs, not a question—more
a naming, a low note of surprise
or distaste. The syllables echo,
uncomfortable as a name whispered
in a room gone suddenly silent.

It isn’t shame, only a brittle
disbelief,
years folding back—
ammonia, shampoo,
the snip of shears,
stories murmured into the dense
privacy of hair.
Versailles, not gilt and mirrors,
but the small palace of the salon,
where hands learn to shape
transformation.
The satisfying weight of hair
slipping through my fingers,
the comfort of skill,
the tangible proof of making
something new.

Then the burnout, slow and quiet—

vibrance unspooling into
mail sorting,
the solitary glide of a kayak,
the steady alchemy of brewing,
the gentle tether of dogs.
Each task: a kind of shedding,
each new rhythm
a search for solid ground.

And then you.
A burst of color in a muted room,
your quiet attention
strangely powerful.
You don't recoil,
only observe—
the memory is not a secret,
not even remarkable,
simply a former skin,
shed and left behind.

There is no confession,
only the ordinary act
of becoming—
letting go,
again and again,
each chapter
a new surface to inhabit.

Inscribing the Earth: Profit and Primal Fury

By Sara Doles

Real estate bleeds where the asphalt
arteries clog, capillaries of concrete
constrict, exhaling the gasps of
the dispossessed. Flesh,
a fleeting tenancy, expires.
The ledger's truth, in
parchment brittle and ink
of ancient blood, inscribes
the Earth's unyielding
value. Soil, that
devourer, patiently
aspires to all.
People, expendable as
spent breath on winter air,
their narratives erased
by the relentless
rubric of profit. They
are footnotes to a deed,
a stain, easily
power-washed from the
sidewalks of progress.
Yet, in the shadowed
cavities of neglect,
where rust blossoms
like a malignant orchid

on forgotten girders,
a new appetite
stirs. The down-
trodden, their faces
etched with the cartography
of hunger, discover
a lexicon of teeth.
A taste, metallic and
brisk, not for sustenance
but for the deep,
ancestral resonance
of blood. It hums
in the hollows of
their bones, a primal
symphony echoing
the land's own
savage memory.
The cobblestones
weep, not tears,
but the thick
gooey residue of a
terrible awakening.
The air itself
thickens, a
dense
syrupy broth
of iron and
unleashed fury,
the future's
hyperbolic
prophecy
scrawled in
the spilled

wine of a
revolt that
was always,
is always,
inevitable.

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